

1

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THE TASK OF THE INSTITUTE OF PLANNED ECONOMY
IN THE GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

The Institute of Planned Economy has the task of supplying the organs of economic planning with highly qualified experts, thoroughly familiar with research results in the field of planning. Furthermore, the institute itself has the mission of continuing and extending research work in the planning field.

The government's resolution concerning the establishment of an Institute of Planned Economy was formulated on 16 February 1950 and was published in gesetzblatt (Legal Gazette), No 17, 1950, over the signatures of Walter Ulbricht, the Deputy Minister-President, and Heinrich Rau, chairman of the Planning Commission. Shortly before, on 14 February, the SED Politburo had issued directives for working out a draft of the Five-Year Plan, and had charged a commission headed by Ulbricht with perfecting control figures for this Plan and creating an exact balance in the economy.

It can virtually be concluded that one of the first steps taken in preparation for the Five-Year Plan was to take a census of existing, qualified economic planners. The government resolution of 16 February 1950 was doubtlessly motivated by a realization that a large staff of expert and socially matured planners was indispensable to the successful completion of the formidable tasks of the Five-Year Plan.

In accordance with the government resolution, the Institute of Planned Economy began its activities with the 1950 - 1951 winter semester.

Whereas the original government plan provided for a capacity of only 150 students the first year, 185 students are actually now studying at the institute. Of these, 138 are first-semester students. Forty-seven students have already completed four semesters of economics or sociology at other schools and will conclude their studies in the fall of 1951 with a special two-semester course at the institute.

- 1 -

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The instituting of a special three-semester course for approximately 200 fifth-semester students, formerly enrolled in other German universities, is planned for the 1951 - 1952 academic year. In addition, during the Five-Year Plan period, which is concurrent with the organizing period of the institute, 300 first-semester students are to be admitted each year. A number of special short courses for planning experts are to be established. The total capacity of the institute will be raised during this period to 1,300 students.

The course of study at the Institute of Planned Economy consists of eight semesters, ending with the State Exam, which grants the degree of Graduate Economic Planner (Diplom-Planwirtschaftler). In the first semester the beginning student receives a fundamental training in political economy of capitalism, philosophy (dialectic and historical materialism), economic history (with special consideration of the labor movement), and the technical subjects indispensable to the planner (bookkeeping, mathematics, physics, chemistry, etc.). In the later semesters the students turn to an intensive study of the political economy of socialism, developed by Lenin and Stalin, and study simultaneously the planning doctrines of the individual branches of economics. At the same time, they begin specializing, guided by their own interests and the demand for economists in various branches.

The study of economic history is concentrated upon the history of the Soviet Union. Special emphasis is placed on the history of the Communist Party in the Soviet Union.

During the entire training period at the institute, the neophyte planners are in close contact with the practical side of their subject. The course of study itself provides for frequent periods of shop practice lasting several weeks. The fifth-semester students visit the plants in which they complete their practical training once a week. The culmination of studies consists of 6 months of practical training, during which the young graduate economists continue under the close supervision of the institute.

The students live in a boarding house where they are well cared for. This makes possible an intensification of studies and the attainment of an academic level heretofore unknown in German universities. The study takes place within the framework of the FDJ student group system.

Among the professors, which include the most eminent economists, are also distinguished government leaders. For example, Heinrich Rau, Deputy Minister-President and chairman of the National Planning Commission, gives a two-hour course in "Agrarian Policy in the GDR and the Planning of Agricultural Production" for fifth-semester students. Several government state secretaries lecture on the theory of planning in various branches of the economy and in overall national economic planning.

It is in no respect coincidental that no less than 64.8 percent of present students are workers and farmers. For future planning experts must not only be superior exponents of the most progressive science of this era, Marxism-Leninism, but also must be inseparably bound to that segment of the German people which is the guarantee for creating a peaceful, democratic, independent, and prosperous Germany, viz., the German laboring class, and, in close union with it, the active peasantry.

The most promising candidates for study at the Institute of Planned Economy will be graduates of industrial and agricultural departments. Numerous applications have already been received from such students. In addition, it should be mentioned that students in mathematical-scientific and sociology departments also qualify for study at the institute.

- 2 -

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Exceptionally gifted graduates of secondary schools, of proven social aptitude, will also be admitted. Similarly, activists and employees in state-owned enterprises and administrations who show special aptitude for planning study and possess the necessary general knowledge have a chance of being admitted directly to the institute.

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- 3 -

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